

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Why are we so quick to look on the physical aspects of those around us?



Ray Charles



Stephen Hawking



Marlee Matlin



Christopher Reeve



Itzhak Perlman

When we look at their hearts, souls, and contributions to life, then there are no 'handicaps,' or even disabilities.

Report cover by: Susahnah Beardall
2009 J. Irwin Miller Human Rights Commission
Art Contest Winner - High School



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Columbus, IN

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MISSION:

*TO LEAD COLUMBUS IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING AN INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY BY:*

- * Enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance*
- * Educating the public*
- * Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality*
- * Empowering community members to advance this mission.*



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CITY OF COLUMBUS - HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE:

“It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for and in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.” -- *Columbus Human Rights Commission Ordinance 9.24.020*

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

ORGANIZATION

Chairperson

Gilbert A. Palmer

Vice Chairperson

Anthony McClendon

Secretary

John Roberts

Treasurer

Akua B. Agyei

Commissioners:

Term Ends:

Akua B. Agyei	2009
Trena Carter	2011
Ian Kohen	2010
Greg Lewis	2009
Anthony McClendon	2009
Gilbert A. Palmer	2011
Rosalind Pegram	2010
John Roberts	2011
Jason Staley	2010
John Stroh	2009
Pamela Vincent	2011

Commission Volunteer: Shiva Rallapalli

City Council Liaison: Priscilla Scalf

Commission Attorney: Eric Hayes

Staff

Director:

Arlette Cooper Tinsley

Deputy Director:

Lorraine Smith

Secretary: Lula Young

2008 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear Mayor Armstrong, members of the Columbus City Council and Columbus citizens,

It is with pride that I submit to you the Columbus Human Rights Commission's 2008 Annual Report, which covers the period of January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008.

2008 was a year of historic significance in civil rights in Columbus, as it was in our nation. For 46 years, the Commission has worked to fulfill its mission of **"building and maintaining an inclusive community."** In 2008, the Commission successfully mediated its first complaint where a community member alleged sexual orientation discrimination in employment. Through the expert mediation of Commissioner John Stroh, the Commission was able to reach a settlement that was acceptable to both the employer and the complainant. Decades

from now, it will be noted by future leaders of Columbus that ***Columbus was a civil rights leader in Indiana***—extending voluntary mediation to persons alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, even before the state statute was changed.

2008 will forever be remembered as the "Year of the Flood." The Human Rights Commission rose to the challenge of massive numbers of people being displaced from their homes and workplaces, as the staff made themselves available 24/7 to the Red Cross volunteers who were trying to place people in new homes and lodging, because fair housing and potential discrimination issues arose. The staff attended all emergency flood recovery meetings and participated in the Mayor's community information fair for people affected by the flood. The Deputy Director represented the Commission on the Recovery Team's Public Affairs Sub-Committee.

I serve on the Diversity Councils at both IUPUC and the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation (BCSC), and it is clear from looking at our young people that Columbus is growing and changing. Unlike other cities in Indiana, some of which are shrinking in population, Columbus is growing because it welcomes change and diversity. Both schools have seen a huge increase in diversity over the last ten years, with BCSC now being 15% minority, in a school district that a decade ago was almost entirely Caucasian. The largest minority group represented in BCSC is bi-racial—an indicator of the changing direction of our community and nation. Ivy Tech, as well, has representatives on our Commission Board of Directors, and it is a school that shows



Commissioners Gil Palmer, John Roberts, Akua Agyei, Tony McClendon, Trena Carter and Rosalind Pegram with two Columbus students reporting on their attendance at the Indiana Conference on the Social Status of the Black Male in Indianapolis

huge increases in percentages of ethnic students in 2008 compared to 2007. Increases include: Native American – 143%; African American – 113%; Asian/Pacific Islander – 59%; Multiracial – 59%; Hispanic – 30%. These schools represent our local young people—the future of Columbus that will grow its economy. It is vital to be a community that welcomes diversity of all kinds.

Nationally, 2008 was an historic year for civil rights, as this great country elected its first African-American President. Columbus was visited by two candidates for President, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, as Indiana played a key role in deciding the future leadership of the country.

A highlight of 2008 was our partnership with the Cummins Foundation, Heritage Foundation and First Presbyterian Church to offer a community presentation by Former Human Rights Commissioner and Former Ambassador James A. Joseph, who spoke to the community on what makes a true leader, as well as his experiences living in Columbus and South Africa.

In 2008, the Human Rights Commission, as part of their continuous improvement efforts, began two Six Sigma projects—one led by Black Belt Sameer Samudra and another Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt Project that included Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Lorraine Smith as part of the Mayor's Lean Six Sigma Project for all city departments, working with Ivy Tech on collaborative projects. These projects are continuing into 2009. The Commission understands that it must continually become more efficient and effective, as government resources are increasingly limited, but at the same time is aware that the role of civil rights enforcement is vital to the future economic health of Columbus.

I am invigorated by the work we are doing for the people of Columbus. The Commission continues to find local solutions to local challenges of discrimination by emphasizing technical assistance to local businesses and schools as part of the Commission's community education efforts. The Commission is fortunate to have City Council-appointed Commissioners whose skill and dedication have made this successful year possible. While all city agencies sustained budget cuts in 2008, including the Human Rights office, we are rising to the challenge and continuing to provide services. We appreciate the support shown by this Mayor's administration and by City Council, as they support the vital work of the Commission.

With hard work, continuous improvement, and by forging cooperative alliances with other community groups, the Commission is committed to working toward this aim through the accomplishment of the goals we have set for 2009.

We remain in the service of the people of Columbus, and this report is

Respectfully submitted,

Gilbert A. Palmer

Gilbert A. Palmer

Chairperson, Human Rights Commission

2008 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Year in Review

This is our Columbus! Unexpected and Unforgettable. An inclusive, diverse commUNITY where differences are celebrated. —*Mayor Fred Armstrong, reporting on the State of the City, February, 2009*

INTRODUCTION

2008 has been a year of restoration and renewal for human rights, as federal legislation, including the 2008 Civil Rights Act was passed, reversing several recent court decisions that limited civil rights in areas of disability, age, race and gender, thereby re-establishing protections against certain types of age discrimination, disability discrimination, race and national origin discrimination. History was made in 2008, when President Bush signed the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act (GINA). GINA is the first major new piece of civil rights legislation in the new Century. This statute is the first of its kind federally, and rationalizes a patchwork of state-level laws, creating a better environment for employers who operate in many different jurisdictions. While the Commission has not in the past seen local allegations of genetic discrimination, staffers have had persons in the community ask about having their children tested for various health problems, expressing a reluctance to do so for fear of discrimination. Over time, GINA is expected to protect people in the U.S. and also open doors to better medical care. A fear of discrimination leads to an under-utilization of genetic tests, which ultimately hurts employers and insurers, too, since patients are not able to take preventative measures that could eliminate the need for expensive care, medical leaves, and sick days down the road. GINA is designed to prevent that.

The staff of the Columbus Human Rights Commission works every day to stay apprised of changes in civil rights law, shape its investigations accordingly, and educate the community to prevent problems before they occur. A professional staff under the supervision of volunteer Commissioners conducts the daily operations of the Columbus Human Rights Commission. Staff includes the Director, the Deputy Director, and one administrative assistant. The Commission is mandated by ordinance to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination, protects the rights of both Complainants and Respondents, and is responsible for enforcing Columbus Human Rights Ordinance. The Human Rights Ordinance protects persons from discrimination in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Charges of can be filed alleging discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) Local ordinance also protects those who have filed a complaint or participated in the investigation of a complaint from *retaliation* for such actions. Anyone claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged unlawful practice, and who can articulate a *prima facie* case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination, has the right to file a complaint charging discrimination under the ordinance of Columbus.

COMMISSIONERS

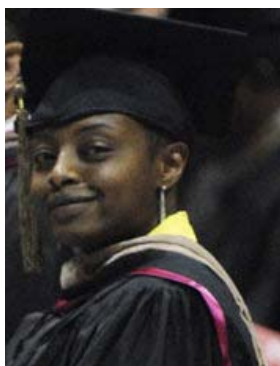
The City of Columbus Municipal Code states that the City Council shall appoint persons residing in Bartholomew County to serve on the Human Rights Commission for three-year, renewable terms, “serving without compensation and broadly representative of the community’s diversity.” Comprised of volunteer Columbus citizens, the Commission is able to effectively carry out its work because of the diversity of talent and experience brought to the Commission by each individual board member. For over nineteen years, the City Council has chosen an open application process for Human Rights Commission appointments. Any member of the community who wishes to serve on the Commission



Commissioners Palmer, Roberts, Vincent and Carter receiving the oath of office from Mayor Armstrong. The Commissioners serve as volunteers without compensation and are appointed by City Council through an open application process.

may fill out an application, which is then reviewed by the City Council member serving as a liaison to the Human Rights Commission—in 2008 liaison duties were filled by Councilwoman Priscilla Scalf, as Councilman T. Craig Hawes was sent for another tour of duty, in service of our country. Council Liaison Scalf, as well as other members of Council, review applications of prospective new commissioners and conduct interviews. The Human Rights Commission appreciates the time and care City Council takes by creating an open application process and selecting hard-working individuals with diverse backgrounds and experience to serve as volunteer commissioners. This year, a four-year term of committed service, Commissioner Jason Staley chose to resign when he returned to school full time and needed to balance that commitment with employment. The Commission appreciates Commissioner Staley’s dedicated service to the cause of human rights.

Commissioner Gil Palmer, Trena Carter, and John Roberts were reappointed in 2008, and Commissioner Pamela Vincent was appointed to the Commission in 2008. For the benefit of the reader, this report includes brief biographical information on current Commissioners:



*Commissioner Agyei
receiving her MBA at
IUPUC.*

Commissioner Akua Agyei has lived in Columbus for over five years and works at Cummins Inc. She came to the U.S. twelve years ago, leaving her home of Accra, Ghana, to earn her B.S. at Miami University of Ohio and her M.S. at Virginia Tech. She recently earned her MBA from Indiana University, while continuing to work full time. She currently serves as the Chair of the Cummins African & African-American Affinity Group (AAAAG). She serves as the Commission's liaison to the Mayor's Multi-cultural Awareness Committee, as well as serving as Treasurer of the Commission.

Commissioner Trena Carter, a twenty-year resident of Columbus, Commissioner Carter was appointed in late 2006. Trena works at Administrative Resources association (ARa), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments in Southern Indiana to assist in project planning and development to enhance quality of life by applying for and managing governmental grants, to implement those projects. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two daughters and have raised their family in Columbus. She has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, Girl Scouts, Leadership Bartholomew County and serves on the Human Resource Team and the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Commissioner Carter served on the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the 2007 Annual Dinner Meeting in April, a special 45th anniversary celebration of the Commission.

Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed to the Commission in 2004. He has been a member of the Columbus community for over sixteen years. Ian currently works at Cummins Inc. as a Purchasing Leader and has been a Six Sigma Black Belt. His outside interests include spending time with his two sons Max and Henry and wife Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens in the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being part of the Columbus Rotary Club. He has taught the "7 Habits of Highly Successful People" to many groups inside and outside of Cummins. In 2006, Commissioner Kohen chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that studied the issue of discrimination based sexual orientation, gender identity and age, as it related to enforcement mechanisms available to the Commission. Ian has served as liaison to the local Interfaith Forum and currently serves as liaison to the Gay/Straight Alliance.

Commissioner Greg Lewis is the Commission's liaison to the Interfaith Forum here in Columbus. He is the chair of the social studies department at Columbus East High School, where he has taught since 1994, and Central Middle School, where he taught between 1992 and 1994. He has become well known for his portrayals of historic figures, including a different president each year for the last 13 years on Presidents' Day.

He has lived in Columbus since 1984, with his wife Nancy and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the American Red Cross - Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East High School. Greg created and teaches an interdisciplinary English-U.S. History course called American Studies, and he developed a unit on diversity in America and makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Greg enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, and biking.

Commissioner Tony McClendon has lived in Columbus for fourteen years and he and his wife, Pat, have two daughters. He is the associate pastor at Faith Ministries, the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has been volunteering as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a new program focused on at risk middle school boys called TALKS. He is a native of Atlanta, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management and as an adjunct instructor in the English department of Ivy Tech Community College. He has special skills as a public speaker that he brings to the Commission as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Tony is currently servicing as Vice-Chair of the Commission and he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools, at the Commission's request. He has served on the Commission's nominating Committee.

Commissioner Gil Palmer was first appointed to the Commission in 1993, and he has garnered such respect from his fellow commissioners that he has been unanimously elected Chairperson every year for eleven years. The Chairperson is required to work very hard for the Commission, as he is responsible for reviewing all findings of fact, and requests for subpoenas, restraining orders, and he must prepare and hold any necessary hearings. Gil, a graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, but at the same time works tirelessly on behalf of the Commission and as a volunteer in the community, including his service in the Columbus Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana and Centerstone Research Institute boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Advisory Council, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Cabinet, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Columbus Economic Growth Council and Senior Center Services board.

Commissioner Rosalind Pegram was first appointed to the Commission in 2007. Commissioner Pegram, who is from Puerto Rico, is a nineteen -year resident of Columbus. She is a former teacher for Monroe and Bartholomew counties. Commissioner Pegram has a M.S. in Education from Indiana University-Bloomington and

is bi-lingual in Spanish and English. She is currently working on starting her own business. Commissioner Pegram serves as the Commission's liaison to the Immigration Issues Group of Columbus. She represented the Commission on the Immigration forum with Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith. She volunteers for Proyecto Salud-Volunteers in Medicine, and she is a Founding Board Member for the new Columbus Latin American Association.

Commissioner John Roberts joined the Columbus community eight years ago and he currently is Dean of The School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus, and in the music ministry at Faith Ministries. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville Public Schools. When he first came to Columbus, he worked as Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, the University of Louisville and National University. He has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. John is a father, and a grandfather of three. He and his partner Thom are in the process of buying a new home in downtown Columbus. John has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations providing a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, and chaired the Ad Hoc Committee which planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. John serves as secretary to the Commission.

Commissioner Jason Staley was appointed to the Commission in 2004. A native of Columbus, he until recently worked as the Director of Client Services for Human Services and the Director of the Horizon House Homeless Shelter. He now works at Columbus Regional Mental Health Unit on PRN status and recently completed his LPN nursing degree. He resigned from the Commission when he decided to return again to school to pursue his R.N. degree. Jason grew up in Columbus and makes this home with his wife Susan and three children. As a student at IUPU-Columbus, he interned with the Human Rights Commission and found it interesting and rewarding, and organized a conference on Social Justice, Social Equality and Social Change for the North Central Sociological Association. Commissioner Staley has mediated complaints for the Commission.

Commissioner John Stroh has lived in Columbus for twenty-three years with his wife and children, and he is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-grade program. He has a long record of commitment to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal Employee, volunteer

project peace presenter and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. John has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education Class (PIE) on Diversity Issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have John's service on the Board.

Commissioner Pamela Vincent was appointed to the Commission in 2008. Pamela has resided in Columbus for 1 year, and she has been active in the community for over four years through her employment with Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana in Columbus, where she recently served as Program Chair of Social Sciences and Humanities and continues to teach in the department. She attended University of Tennessee where she completed her Master's degree. Pamela has a particular interest in at-risk youth and adults as well as assisting those returning to the community from the criminal justice system. She is an advocate for improving the treatment of inmates and finding better ways to assist those convicted of drug offenses.

COMPLIANCE, MEDIATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

[See graphics, pp. 16-19].

Civil rights law, at the local, state and federal level, has become increasingly complex in its nature and application. This increased complexity is principally due to the enactment of major legislation in the past decade, which affects the role of the Columbus Human Rights Commission at the local level because federal and state statutes and the resulting legal precedents impact interpretation of the local Human Rights Ordinance. In 2008, national origin was the number one basis of complaints filed with the Commission, with race/color the second type of most frequently filed complaint. This continues a three year trend: In 2005, 70% of the complaints received alleged some kind of national origin discrimination, and 2006 continued the trend, with 67% of the complaints alleging national origin discrimination. In 2007, 55% of all complaints involved national origin, race and color discrimination. Our long-term economic health as a city is tied to how well we welcome newcomers, including in places of public accommodation. Disability discrimination is also a stubborn area of public accommodation discrimination— we continue to be challenged to offer meaningful access to all community services, housing, education and public accommodations within businesses to people with disabilities.

For the first time, a community member was willing to formally file a complaint of sexual orientation discrimination in employment. It always takes courage to be the first. Over the last two years the Commission has conducted a number of intakes in this area as well as gender identity discrimination, but the Complainants have chosen to let their complaints drop, for a number of reasons. The Commission was able to settle this complaint through voluntary mediation.

Instances of respondent-employers agreeing to mediation dropped in 2008. Only future years will tell us if this is a trend, but it appears that respondents are less likely to wish to mediate a complaint if it is part of an overall reduction in force in their workplace, for fear of calling into question numerous termination decisions. It is vitally important that employers follow the law when it comes to reductions in force, and the Human Rights Commission provides small to medium-size businesses with technical assistance in that regard.

Most complaints were filed in the area of Employment, although the Commission did, as it did in 2007, receive a complaint in Public Accommodation. While the Commission did not receive formal complaints in education or housing, many instances of technical assistance allowed situations to be resolved informally, which is often best for the parties involved.

While the employment cases in 2008 often included an allegation of discriminatory termination or difference in terms and conditions, all of the employment complaints included simultaneous allegations of hostile work environment. It is vitally important that Columbus foster a welcoming work environment that does not include slurs based on race, national origin, gender, age or disability. This creates an environment where every hiring/termination decision is distrusted by employees and also is an unproductive work environment for everyone. When faced with a decision of using the local, voluntary mediation process for age discrimination, or instead filing a federal complaint, all complainants in 2008 chose federal enforcement. Indiana legislators should take notice of the cost of federal age discrimination suits and empower local human rights agencies to offer an enforceable complaint process.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE

The Commission is a party to written agreements, which resolve complaints of alleged discrimination filed with the agency. A Commission staff person is assigned to monitor the terms and conditions of these agreements, as well as Commission orders. Deputy Director Smith monitored several compliance agreements in 2008.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

Columbus ordinance provides that any person who claims to be aggrieved by an unlawful practice in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and education and can articulate a prima facie case pursuant to a recognized legal theory of discrimination (*based on race, religion, color, gender, disability, ancestry, national origin, pregnancy, familial status (housing only), sexual orientation, gender identity and age (voluntary mediation only) and retaliation*) may file a complaint with the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The Commission shall review and, if

necessary, investigate the complaint. Complaints must be filed within 90 days of the last discriminatory act alleged, except in housing, where some complaints may be filed 180 days from the last discriminatory act alleged.

An individual may write, e-mail, telephone or come into Columbus Human Rights Commission office to begin the filing process. If the complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, a formal complaint may be submitted. The staff is available to assist in drafting a complaint based on information provided by the complainant. An employment, housing, or public accommodation complaint must be signed, verified and notarized before it can be officially filed with the Commission. Some inquiries were outside of the Commission's jurisdiction or beyond the timely filing limit and are referred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other agencies. The Commission offers a voluntary mediation program in all complaints prior to investigation, at the option of the parties. Mediation services offer a possible alternative to complete investigation.

When mediation services are not selected by one of the parties, or when mediation services fail, a complaint may be sent for full investigation.

The Commission is responsible for investigating all complaints filed. It is also responsible for conciliation of cases where the investigating commissioner has indicated there is probable cause to credit allegations of the complaints. During a full investigation the Commission staff person will interview the complainant, review relevant documents, conduct interviews with witnesses, and summarize the case for the investigating commissioner. The investigator's role is that of a neutral fact finder. The Commission staff does not determine the outcome of the case, but rather gathers and presents the facts with a recommendation, based on the application of relevant civil rights law, to a Chairperson of the Commission for a determination. All information discovered throughout the course of the investigation is gathered in an objective and impartial manner. Depending upon the information obtained during the investigative process, the Chair makes a determination of either "Probable Cause" or "No Probable Cause." An attempt will be made to reach a written settlement between complainant and respondent if the Commission finds "Probable Cause." If conciliation efforts fail, the case may be scheduled for a public hearing.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Commission offers a voluntary procedure in which the parties to discrimination complaints filed with Commission may attempt to mediate and resolve their controversies short of having Commission investigate and process the complaint. The mediation procedure has been an effective means of resolving complaints, as in some years, more

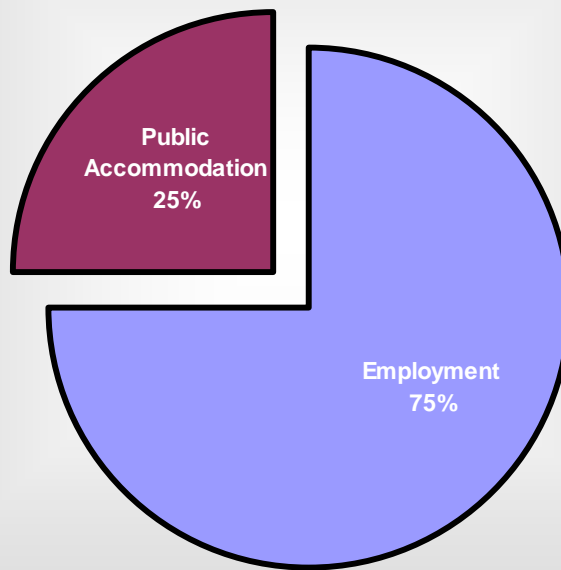
than 75% of all CHRC cases were referred to mediation. In 2008, the Commission successfully mediated its first sexual orientation in employment complaint.

Seven years ago the Commission made a commitment to setting concrete, tangible, numeric caseload goals on a yearly basis for completion of various steps of the investigation and ultimately, case completion. The Commission is committed to continuous improvement in case processing. The Commission continues to offer mediation as a form of alternative dispute resolution to all complainants and respondents. Mediation is entirely voluntary. Some mediations result in cash settlements, and other mediations may result in re-training or modifications in policy.

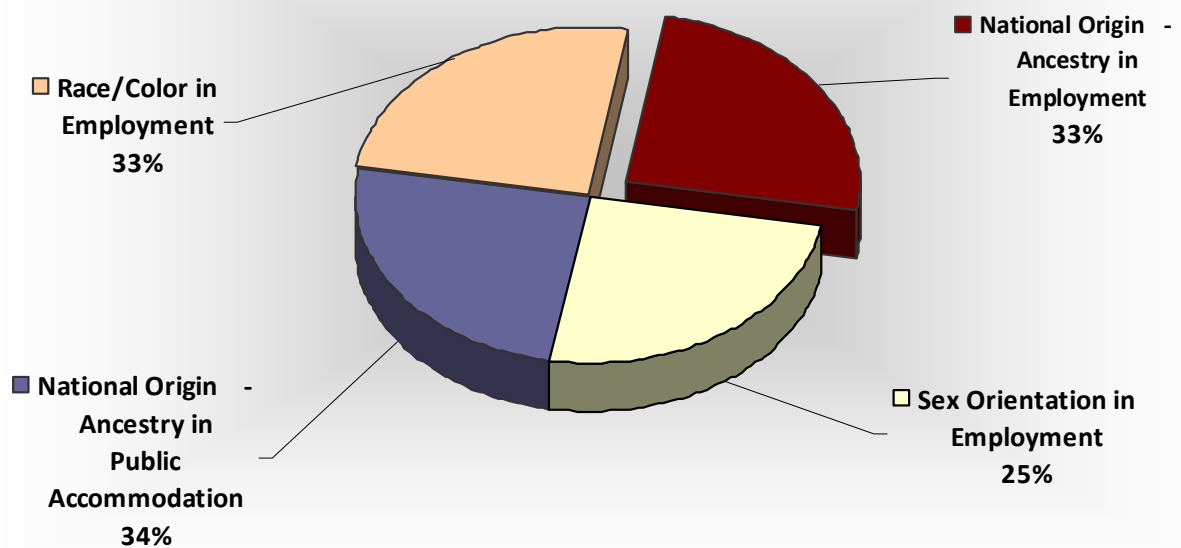
The Commission continues to emphasize equitable remedies to discrimination, including training, reinstatement as a tenant or employee, education, and restructured business processes in order to prevent future discrimination.

If mediation fails or the parties decline to mediate, the Commission conducts an investigation. If evidence of discrimination is found, the Commission's role is to make the complainant whole; that is, as close as possible, put the complainant back at a point where he or she would have been had the complainant not been discriminated against. To do this, one or two Commissioners are appointed as conciliators in each case where evidence of discrimination is found. The conciliation process brings together the assigned conciliators and the parties in various combinations to develop an agreement that will compensate the complainant for his or her loss due to discrimination. The agreement also provides for the implementation of policies and training to prevent future discrimination, as well as other equitable remedies, for example, reinstatement as an employee or a tenant, if that remedy is necessary to make the complainant whole. The Commission's history of successful mediations and conciliations, thereby making public hearings unnecessary, is evidence of the importance of having skilled and knowledgeable commissioners appointed to the Commission.

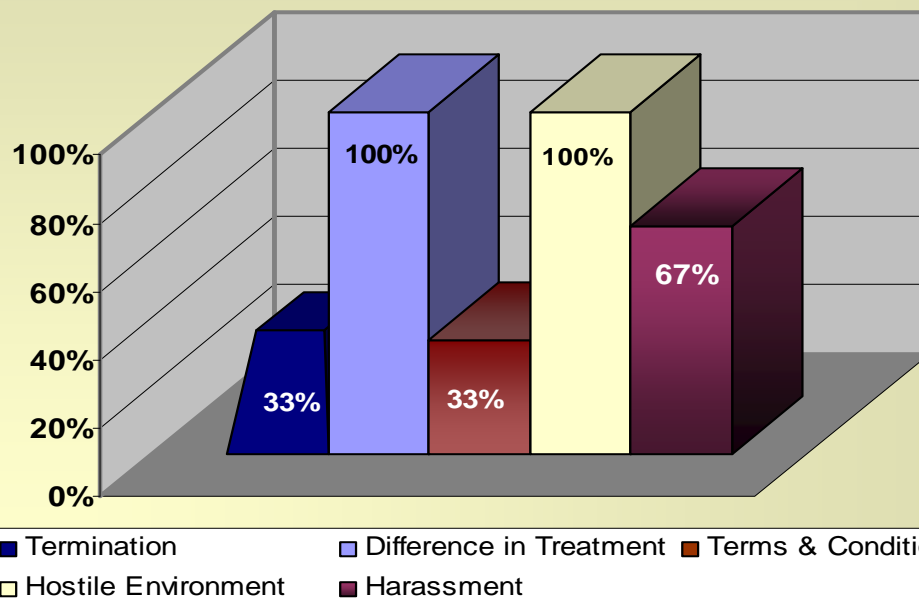
2008 Human Rights Commission Cases
Field of Alleged Discrimination



2008 Columbus Human Rights Commission Cases
Basis of Alleged Discrimination



2008 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CASES BASIS IN EMPLOYMENT



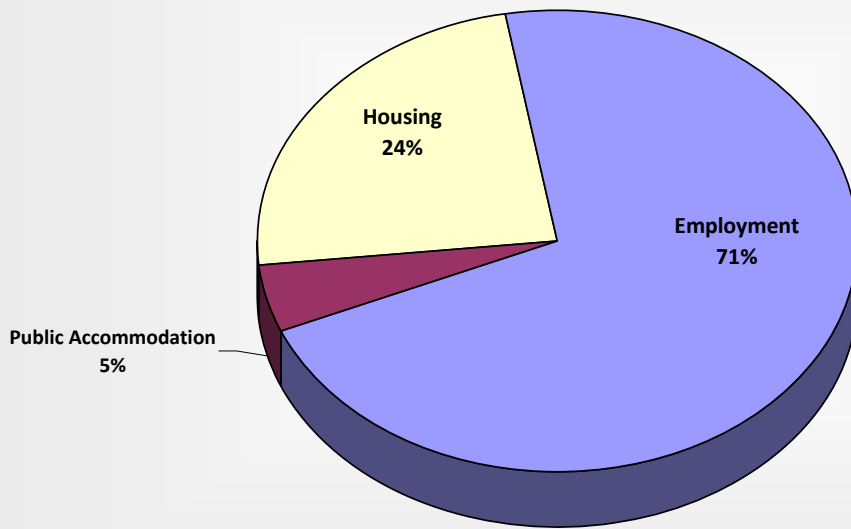
The remaining charts represent complaints that were filed with Technical Assistance provided by the Columbus Human Rights Commission. The agencies are identified as follows:

EEOC – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

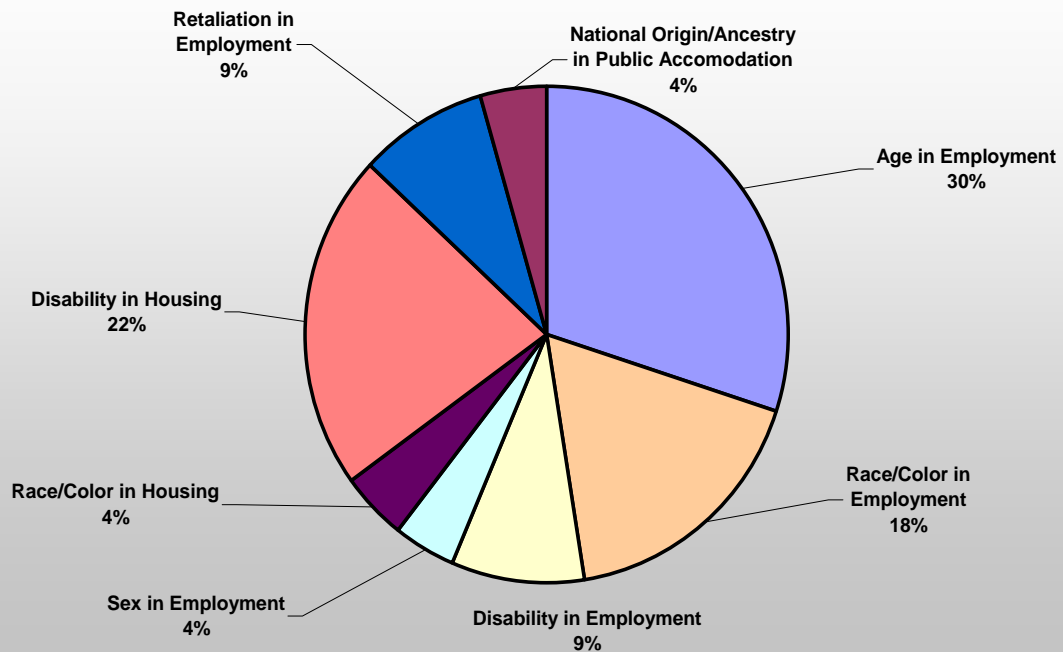
HUD – Department of Housing & Urban Development

ICRC – Indiana Civil Rights Commission

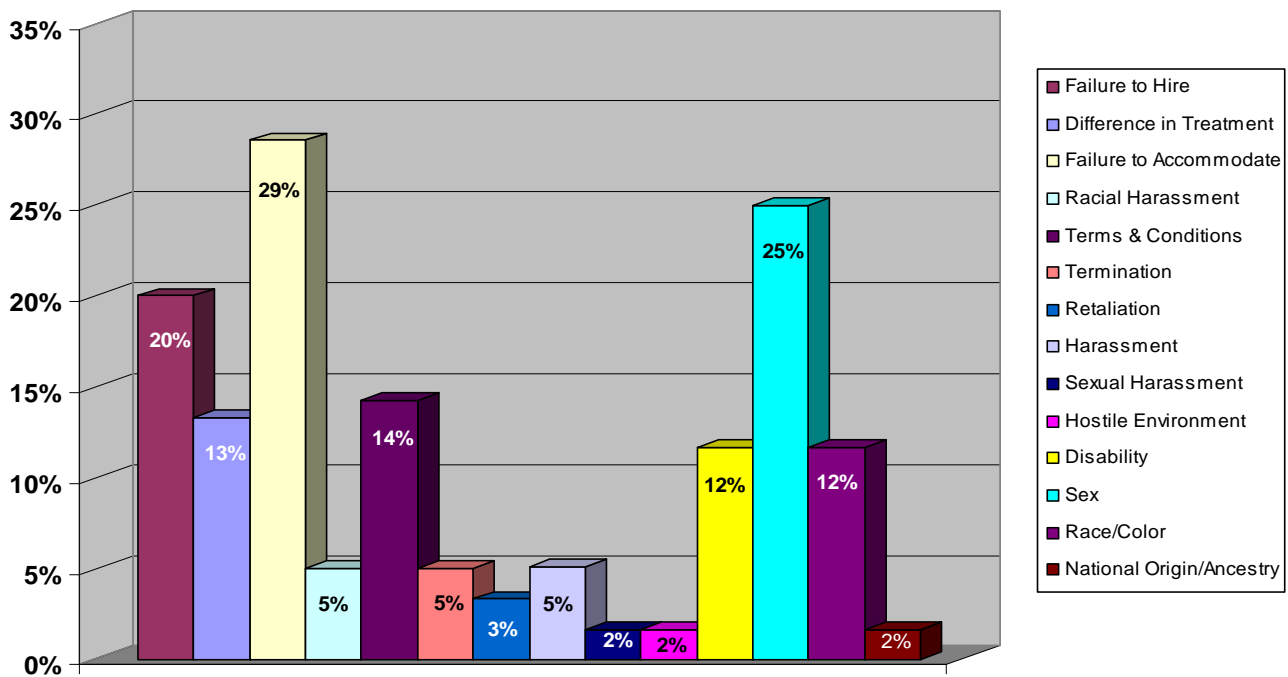
**2008 EEOC, HUD, ICRC Complaints filed with Columbus
Human Rights Commission Technical Assistance
Field of Alleged Discrimination**



BASIS of EEOC/HUD/ICRC COMPLAINTS - 2008



2008 EEOC - HUD - ICRC Cases
Complaints Filed with Technical Assistance
BASES of ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH 2008:

In addition to its enforcement and compliance activities, the Commission is also required by ordinance to inform the public about civil rights laws, what constitutes discrimination and how acts of discrimination can be avoided. The Columbus Human Rights Commission's technical assistance and training program sponsors, develops, and conducts a vast amount of training across the Columbus, especially considering the small size of the office. This task is accomplished through seminars and conferences that are open to the public, onsite training and presentations for private businesses, municipalities, college-level classes, K-12 classes, the annual dinner meeting and the development of its website. During 2008, the agency conducted seminar and training sessions throughout the Columbus, training public and private organizations, civic groups, neighborhood organizations, realtors, landlords and schools. The Commission's information services are provided free of charge to individuals throughout Columbus. Civil rights topics most often requested included issues relating to sexual harassment, fair housing, diversity training and the history of diversity in Columbus.

In addition to information and training, the agency creates and maintains Commission publications. During 2008, the agency distributed hundreds of informational brochures and fielded telephone inquiries asking for assistance. Publications of the Columbus Human Rights Commission include its Annual Report, its Rules & Regulations, brochures on topics such as *Human Rights*, *Fair Housing*, *Pregnancy Discrimination*, *familial status discrimination*, *Anti-Bullying/Harassment in Education*, with one general brochure available in *Spanish*, and the periodic publication of the Commission's newsletter. During 2008, the Commission continued to update and improve pages on the City's informational web site. The site not only provides information on the Columbus Human Rights Commission, an oral history video of civil rights in Columbus, its Commissioners and the law it is empowered to enforce, but it has links to other state human rights organizations and various civil rights related web sites. The web page address is www.columbus.in.gov and then under services, select "human rights." The Director and Deputy Director continued to provide technical assistance to local businesses, community groups and individuals with regard to their civil rights questions in 2008. Often this will involve extensive research and preparation, as many times employers wish to understand the intersection of various laws, and community groups need assistance in furthering their human rights goals, and will ask the Commission to review and/or draft documents on their behalf. This service has become incredibly important as businesses have increasingly outsourced to small and medium-sized businesses that lack in-house counsel or human resources departments. The Commission is aware that small to medium-sized businesses are the engine of the economy, and that to grow, those businesses must implement successful and legally compliant policies and procedures.

Community education and outreach activities conducted by Human Rights staff and Commissioners in 2008 have included: *Community Presentation by Former Human Rights Commissioner and Former U.S. Ambassador James A. Joseph, Richards Elementary Career Day; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Juneteenth Events; Statewide Holocaust Memorial Events; Mayor's Community Events; Monthly County-Wide Bullying Prevention Taskforce meetings; Taylorsville Elementary Safety Committee; Immigration Issues Committee Meetings; Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee meetings; India Association Summer-fest attendance; Chinese New Year celebration; ADA State-wide Teleconferences; Fair Housing Trainings to Local Land Management Companies; History of Diversity in Columbus to local K-12 classes and college classes; East Senior Project Judging; Youth Salute; Richards Exchange City; IUPUC Faculty Convocations and Trainings.*

NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY: PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS IN 2008:

The Commission continued to collaborate and partner with other organizations concerned with human rights, in order to better fulfill our mission of "challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality":

CAMEO: In 2008, Director Arlette Tinsley was asked to facilitate the formation of the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO), a new project of the Heritage Fund, The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, to bring together different Ethnic Associations in Columbus and foster a welcoming community, as the Nationalities Council and International Center have done in Indianapolis. As Mayor recognized in his State of the City address, this is an innovative project that will help Columbus fuel its economic growth in the future, as communities grow when they welcome newcomers. Facilitation of this new CAMEO group continues into 2009.



Bartholomew County Flood Recovery Team: Whenever there is a tragedy that involves people being displaced from their homes and jobs, civil rights issues arise as people try to recover their jobs and find new housing, or navigate the process of repairing their homes. The Human Rights Commission staff made themselves available 24/7 to Red Cross volunteers who had several questions about fair housing law, as they tried to place

individuals and families in available housing in the community. The Commission participated in the Mayor's information fair for community members, attended all emergency meetings for the community, and the Deputy Director represented the Commission on the Public Affairs SubCommittee of the Bartholomew County Flood Recovery team.

Heritage Fund– The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County: Deputy Director Smith continues to serve on this important foundation, and the Commission is pleased to encourage and support community service amongst its employees. Deputy Director Smith is serving on various subcommittees, including grants and the Lilly Scholarship selection Committee. Deputy Director Smith was also selected to co-chair the Outreach Committee which is spearheading the new initiative, CAMEO (Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization).

COMMISSIONER LIAISONS:

The Commission has successfully implemented a Commissioner Liaison process, whereby Commissioners serve as the liaison to key groups in our community who have requested ongoing communication and collaboration with the Human Rights Commission. Several Commissioners, including Commissioners Lewis, Stroh, Kohen, Pegram, and Agyei serve as Liaisons to various groups in the community.

- **Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee:** Commissioner Akua Agyei served as the Commission's representative to the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Awareness Committee in 2008, and the Human Rights Commission, and the Committee worked on several projects, including the Cultural Awareness website, Ethnic Expo, and Neighbors Talking events.
- **Leadership Bartholomew County 2008:** In November, Deputy Director Smith and Director Tinsley partnered with Fredricka Joyner, moderator of LBC, to offer diversity day training for LBC participants, focusing on all aspects of diversity.
- **NAACP:** The Commission continues to offer technical assistance and support to members of the NAACP and the organization as a whole. NAACP members have referred students to the Commission to get support for international education, as our donations account and policy permits.
- **Economic Diversity Council/African American Association:** A new community group formed in 2006, and in 2008 Chairperson Palmer continued to represent the Commission in these discussions. Deputy Director Lorraine Smith facilitated a series of discussions with this group to look at the possibility of creating an African American

Association, in order to participate in the new CAMEO group being formed by the Heritage Fund. The Economic Diversity Council, convened by Tom Harmon of Harmon Construction, Frank Griffin and Hubert Goodman of Cummins Inc. has the intent to research where the African American community fits into the economic development plan of the city and their long-term goal is to mobilize the African-American community based upon the ten 'covenants' outlined by Tavis Smiley in his book, *A Covenant with Black America*. The council is developing subcommittees to research education, economic development and justice in the Columbus community.

- **Su Casa:** Staff continued to offer support to Su Casa clients when civil rights issues arise. Commissioner Rosalind Pegram is the liaison to this group.
- **Immigration Issues Group:** A new grassroots community group was convened by Laura Hurt in 2006 and meetings continued in 2008, in an effort to bring together social service agencies, government agencies, school officials, human resource managers and other business leaders who work with the immigrant community to address various issues affecting the health, quality of life, and civil rights of immigrants. Commissioner Rosalind Pegram is the liaison to this group.
- **African-American Student Programming:** African-American Male National Conference (AAMNC): The Commission offered scholarships to local high school and college students wishing to attend this conference in Indianapolis, and the students spoke to Commissioners in October regarding their experiences.
- **Inclusive Community Coalition:** A new community group was formed in 2007 to focus on community education regarding sexual orientation and gender identity through non-political forums, and the Human Rights Commission voted to become a member of this group, with Commissioner John Stroh acting as Commission liaison. Commissioners and staff attended various ICC events in 2008.
- **Interfaith Forum:** The Commission continued to support this group's programming with Commissioner Greg Lewis acting as liaison.
- **Gay/Straight Alliance:** Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed as liaison for 2006 and continued in this role in 2008. Commissioner Kohen worked hard to maintain effective communication with the G/SA. Commissioner Kohen also helped provide technical assistance to students in Columbus seeking to start a student G/SA, and Commissioner Kohen was integral in referring a G/SA meeting attendee to the Commission to file a Complaint in 2008.
- **Police Audit and Review Committee:** Chairperson Palmer and Director Tinsley served as Human Rights representatives to the Police Audit and Review Committee's quarterly meetings in 2008. The Board of Works and Public Safety's resolution

concerning the Audit and Review Committee requires the Human Rights Commission to send a representative to this Committee. No appeals to the Citizen's Review Board of the Audit and Review Committee were heard in 2008. The Director handles all of the processing/paperwork of such an appeal.

SHARPENING THE SAW—CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS:

Continuing Legal Education: Director Tinsley and Deputy Director Smith attended ongoing continuing legal education so as to offer the best service possible to the community members and Commissioners were offered conference and training opportunities.

HATE/BIAS 2008:



Indiana said NO to Hate in 2008:

This photo looks like it could be from 1939, but it is from 2008, and features Indiana 2nd District Congressional Candidate Tony Zirkle, who was the keynote speaker at an event celebrating Hitler's Birthday Party in 2008. He won 16% of the vote in his district, but lost the primary contest. Zirkle, and people like him, show the importance of ongoing diversity and cultural competency training in Indiana, so that such candidates will never gain a foothold. Zirkle has promoted segregating the races into states.

The Columbus Human Rights Commission is a longtime member of the **Indiana Hate Crimes Reporting network**, working to educate the community with regard to bias/hate crimes, bias/hate intimidation, and taking reports from the community, as needed, to submit to local law enforcement, the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, or federal law enforcement, as appropriate.

Sadly, as soon as now President Barack Obama declared his candidacy, there was a national spike in bias/hate crimes across our great nation, combined with a 40% increase in hate crimes against Latinos over the last four years, as reported by the FBI. As part of Indiana's Bias Crimes Reporting Network, the Commission assists victims of hate and intimidation and we educate the community on the danger of hate groups and hate crimes. It is vital that we keep our youth from being manipulated by hate groups that try to attract young people through their websites, music and literature. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate groups have grown by 54% since 2000 in the U.S., and Indiana is home to 16 hate groups. In fact, Columbus, in Bartholomew County, is surrounded by counties that have hate groups that claim those counties as a home.

Voters in part of Indiana had a choice to make in 2008, and Indiana chose to say no to extremism by rejecting Tony Zirkle's candidacy for Congress.

2009 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: **ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE**

Objectives:

- Continuously improve procedures, policies and processes to effectively and efficiently enforce the new amendments to the Commission Rules and Regulations regarding age, sexual orientation and gender identity, through voluntary mediation
- Continue to implement strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in complaint investigations and case processing:
- Close minimum of 12 cases by January 1, 2010, and continue to make efficient and effective investigations and case processing the top priority of staff with a goal of closing each complaint filed in 2009 within one year of the date it is filed.
- Continue to facilitate settlement between the parties whenever possible.
- Offer training to any new Commissioners so that they may assume their duties.
- Update the Commission's Secretary's Manual to reflect changes in process and procedures due to changes in Rules and Regulations.

Goal: **EDUCATING THE PUBLIC**

Objectives:

- Explore Six Sigma Voice of the Customer improvements with Commissioners and re-vamp Commissioner training to create "Commissioner as Human Rights Ambassador" Speaker model
- Explore Re-allocation Director and Deputy Director's time to allow Commissioners to take a significant role in community education
- Create Speakers' Bureau brochure highlighting Commissioners
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible).
- Continue to provide technical assistance and training to local businesses, organizations and schools, as requested, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Continue to send Commission staff and volunteers to general speaking engagements throughout the community to educate the community regarding the work and mission of the CHRC, as office schedule allows and using existing training materials.
- Support the creation and independence of CAMEO, the Columbus Multi-Ethnic Organization, and their strategies and goals for operating as a cultural welcoming center for the community
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Committee's work
- Continue Anti-bullying/Anti-harassment training as requested
- Continue to distribute the Oral History video in all appropriate forums
- Annual Dinner
- Essay Contest and Poster Art Contest
- Black History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Women's History Month} Continue projects done in past as applicable
- Continue to build and organize CHRC lending library of human rights resources, books and training materials

Goal: **NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

Objectives:

- Maintain Commission representative on Mayor's Council for Multicultural Awareness and provide technical assistance
- Maintain Commission representative on community's Gay/Straight Alliance, Transit Committee, Mayor's Cultural Awareness Committee, BCSC's school conflict resolution committee, BCSC Bullying

Prevention Task Force, Audit & Review Committee, Immigration Issues Forum, The Interfaith Forum, LBC and the Inclusive Community Coalition.

- Explore additional Liaison roles for Commissioners in the community
- Continue to provide training and technical assistance to LBC as requested, and collaborate on community forums as requested
- Continue to support Welcoming Community Projects, as requested
- Continue newsletter distribution and maintenance of websites (as economically feasible)
- Support the work of the I.U.P.U.C. and Ivy Tech Diversity Cabinet as requested

Goal: CHALLENGING ATTITUDES & SYSTEMS THAT CREATE BARRIERS TO EQUALITY

Objectives:

- Schools: Martin Luther King celebration— help with planning if requested; Schools: Complaint Resolution Process--- maintain appointee as requested by BCSC
- Explore Commissioner role in supporting with BCSC Schools
- Disability Awareness: continue to provide information, research and support for advocates in the community.
- Collaborate with BCSC, NAACP, as well individual community leaders, agencies and organizations to help remedy the achievement gap in our community, relative to minority youth and to address current human rights issues in the community.
- Support the Mayor's Multicultural Awareness: maintain appointee and provide technical assistance, as requested.

--- ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION: 2009

COMMENTS ON THE HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HISTORY

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment to a community that does not tolerate discrimination by funding the Commission. In the 1980s and most recently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today.

PURPOSE OF LOCAL COMMISSIONS:

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation was passed with the notion discrimination is not bound by state, region or locality and that local governments support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONTRIBUTES TO THE VITALITY OF ITS COMMUNITY BY PLAYING AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN A BROAD CIRCLE OF REMEDIES IN FIVE MAIN AREAS:

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems:

The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development:

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws:

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur:

While Columbus is home to a Fortune 500 company who has attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics:

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper. Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights

Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

The Commission's forty-five-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

2009 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY CONTEST & J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST REPORT

The Commission wishes to thank Mayor Fred Armstrong, who supported the 2009 essay and art contests by funding the purchase of the plaques for the student winners. His support of our contest is an example of his commitment to youth involvement in the business of the city.

2009 Essay Topic: "Listen to a Life"

What can you learn when you listen to a life? Young people can become more aware of their own dreams and goals - and what's needed to achieve them - when they hear the real-life stories of older adults. Young people can develop an appreciation for the ongoing value and contributions made by older adults-- thereby helping to prevent age discrimination in our society. The national Listen to a Life Essay Contest is also an opportunity to build closer connections between young and old as they get to know each other in new, often unexpected ways.

2009 Art Contest Topic: "Disable the Label":

There are many kinds of disabilities - some are easily recognizable while others, such as learning disabilities, are not visible. For persons with disabilities-- they feel like they are "people first" and their disability is just one aspect of their life. Most people with disabilities don't want to be defined by the disability-- it is a challenge, but most people have various kinds of challenges. All people need and deserve understanding and respect - whether they have a disability or not.

ESSAY & ART CONTEST DIRECTIONS & INSTRUCTIONS:

To enter the essay contest, a young person who is a 5th-12th grader interviewed an older person over 50 years (could not be a parent; they could be a grandparent, older friend, mentor, neighbor, nursing home resident, etc.) about their hopes and goals through their life, how they achieved goals and overcame obstacles, or how dreams may have changed along the way. What life advice can the older person share? The young person then wrote an essay (300 words maximum-- all words counted) based on the interview. For art: Students were asked to create a work of art that depicts one or more of the following: A) Illustrate the theme "Disable the Label"-- removing barriers in peoples' attitudes toward people with disabilities; or B) Celebrate and illustrate the Columbus Human Rights Commission's protection of persons with disabilities from discrimination.

2009 BENJAMIN M. KING HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY & J. IRWIN MILLER HUMAN RIGHTS ART CONTEST WINNERS

Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art Contests are honored at the Commission's annual dinner where they are presented with a \$100 savings bond, and a book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and writings. The Human Rights Commission congratulates the following winners of the 2009 Essay/Art Contest:

Elementary Essay Division

WINNER: Jay Heiland

ABC Stewart Montessori – 6th Grade

Teacher: Mr. Jerry Maulin

Middle School Essay Division

WINNER: Garrett Mabrey

Northside Middle School – 8th Grade

Teacher: Ms. Julie Calfee

High School Essay Division

WINNER: David Nieters

North High School – 12th Grade

Teacher: Ms. Mimi Hageman



Elementary Art Division

WINNER: Miss Chandler Zeller

Parkside Elementary School – 6th Grade

Teacher: Mrs. Rita Bass

High School Art Division

WINNER: Miss Susahnah Beardall

Columbus Area Home Educators – 10th Grade

Teacher: Ms. Jill Goble



2009 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY/ART CONTEST

PARTICIPATING JUDGES AND TEACHERS

Coordinating a countywide essay/art contest is a major undertaking that would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteer judges, who are citizens from the community who gave up their time for several weeks in order to read the essays and select the winners. Area teachers, many of whom made the contest part of their school assignments, supported the essay contest, thereby insuring its success.

PARTICIPATING JUDGES

Carla Barrett	Warren Baumgart	Chuck Boll
Rick Caldwell	Sharon Craig	Antonio Conejo
Magda Corpus	Cindy Felsten	Susie Gentry
Sarah Grey	Wayne Hanrattie	Shirley Handley
Mary Harmon	Kevin Hilycord	Archele Humes
Beth Morris	J. D. Morris	Tammy Sparks
Ginger Stawicki	Shirley Trapp	Joe Tucker
Thomas Weintraut	April Wolfe-Scott	Mary Young-Bey

2009 ESSAY/ART CONTEST PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

ABC STEWART

JERRY MAULIN

COLS. AREA HOMESCHOOL EDUCATORS:

JILL GOBLE & JACKIE BEARDALL

SMITH ELEMENTARY:

ROB MUSILLAMI

NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

JULIE CALFEE

CRYSTAL RIDDLE

NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

AMY LONDON

MIMI HAGEMAN

HAUSER JR./SR. HIGH

JANEEN BLOMENBURG

PARKSIDE ELEMENTARY

RITA BASS

EDIE LOGSTON

EAST HIGH SCHOOL

PEGGY MYERS

SANDY SPALL

YOUTH SERVICES

CONNIE KINKADE

SHAWN CHARLTON





ESSAY WINNER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIVISION

BY: JAY HEILAND
ABC STEWART SCHOOL – 6TH GRADE
TEACHER: MR. JERRY MAULIN

Biography

Mary Guilford was born at Midvale, Idaho on April 18, 1915, at the beginning of WW I. To her, life was so much different than it is now. She did not have electricity, cars, phones or even TV to listen to. She had to ride horseback to school a distance of 5 miles. Mary and two of her siblings rode one horse. Her dad would wrap a blanket around them, give Daisy (for that was the horse's name) a pat on the hip and say 'Alright Babe', and off to school they would go. The tree of them did this every school day and Daisy never failed them. It ranged from 10 to 25 below zero many mornings in the winters. School buses were unknown when she was in the 1st grade. Her family consisted of her parents, one sister, three brothers, their neighbors and school friends.

School was always easy for Mary and she dearly loved all the other school children and her teachers. High School was always easy for her, except for Algebra. A man that worked for her dad always did her Algebra (since she had to help her brother with the milking of cows and did not get to study her lessons like she should), but she always got a grade of 99% and was exempt from the exams.

Mary did not graduate from high school. She quit in March of 1931 during her junior year at the height of the Great Depression and got married. No married students were allowed to go to Weiser High School. Living through the depression was bad. In 1934, Les and Mary made \$100 over the entire year. In that year, they paid \$15.00 for the birth of their daughter, Fern, and still had \$15.00 left over at the end of the year. Joe, their second child, was born a few years later.

During the depression, they did not have a car so they did not need to pay for gas or insurance. Gas was 17 cents a gallon and 7 cents when on sale. They didn't even need a license to drive. So many people suffered from so many things but, fortunately, Les and Mary raised their living. They raised cows, pigs and chickens. Sugar cost 50 cents for fifty-one (51) pounds but Mary and Les received five gallons of honey for allowing bee hives to be placed in their alfalfa field. They did not need much sugar as the honey sufficed. They made cakes, jellies and jams with the honey. The couple picked currants, choke cherries, haws and many more fruits that grew wild on the rivers and creeks. They had dairy cows which they used for milk, cream, butter and family use. They raised bum lambs and even made their own mattresses. Les and Mary had two horses, Clyde and Bridget. They hooked them to a grist mill to grind rye wheat to make bread for their family and the people in town that had no food. They did not have it so bad, but people that lived in town and had no jobs suffered. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) started by President Roosevelt created jobs during

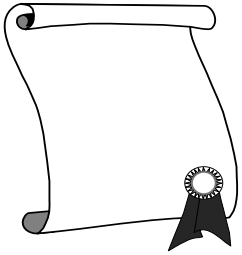
the depression for those that didn't live on farms. The TVA built dams to provide rural electricity in the Western United States.

Mary worked a variety of odd jobs, basically, whatever she could get to do. Les and Mary raised 15,000 turkeys during two different years for the army and that was hard work. She then worked in the packing sheds. That was sort of fun but, a 16 – 18 hour day at 65 cents an hour just didn't cut it. She worked three years at John's Leather Goods making show harnesses for different companies such as Carsten Packing Company for their different shows. This was hard work but Mary enjoyed it when the harnesses were done and felt she had accomplished something worthwhile.

After WWII, they moved to Pocatello, Idaho because working conditions were much better there. Twenty-one years after quitting high school she decided she wanted to finish her education and get better paying jobs. She enrolled in a correspondence school. It was much harder than high school because she was on her own without anyone to answer her questions. She also studied and took a GED test and got her high school GED certificates, which is equivalent to a high school diploma. Mary worked at Massey Harris Ferguson as a bookkeeper until she got a chance to work at the College of Idaho as a part-time bookkeeper. She also took care of the sales for dormitories and meal tickets. Mary loved this job and met so many of the students. They were all nice except one, and he was a prize fighter. She had lots of trouble with him.

She worked nine years at the college. While working at the college she took night classes. She only lacked 3 credits from having a college diploma. Les, her husband, was transferred to Glasgo, Montana in 1954 to build 300 houses for the Air Force. She had to go with him, even if it meant no finishing college. Following this, Mary worked fourteen years for the bench Sewer District in Boise, Idaho and then managed the Wildwood Apartments in Weiser, Idaho for thirteen years until she retired at age 74. She liked the job at the college the best and the turkey job the worst.

Mary cannot say what the happiest moment of her life has been, as she has enjoyed all of it. The greatest challenge was when she had to give Les up and go by herself, because he was a wonderful partner in everything. As far as hobbies go, she just does whatever comes naturally, like housework. Her advice to the youth of America is to get a good education, have an interest in life and in government and do all things to the best of your ability. Give of yourself. Love reflected where needed is the best of all.



ESSAY WINNER
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION
BY: GARRETT MABREY
NORTHSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL – 8TH GRADE
TEACHER: MS. JULIE CALFEE

My Grandpa

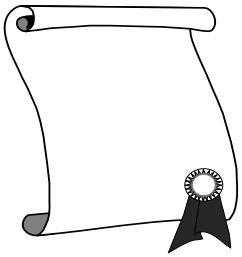
My grandpa (Gary Mabrey) was always a man of his opinion. He wouldn't let anybody tell him what to do if he didn't want to. He made his own decisions.

My grandpa was born on April 12, 1939. He lived with his parents, grandma and five sisters. His grandma came from Germany and was a very racist person, but my grandpa didn't care about race or color. He just looked the person's character.

Although he grew up in a racist neighborhood, his best friend was a black person. His friend's name was Roger. They would always do stuff together. My grandpa would go to his house and eat dinner there a lot.

Driving a bus was my grandpa's first job to do. First day on the job, his boss told him to sit the blacks in the back of the bus if a white man wanted his seat. My grandpa just tried to ignore that comment and go on with his day. Later on though, a white man told the bus driver to move a black man, but my grandpa refused to do so. That man who wanted the seat later on went to my grandpa's boss and told him what happened. Then my grandpa's boss went up to him and started yelling at him. My grandpa just said, 'I quit' and left after that.

I think this tells a lot about my grandpa's character. He's always a man of his word.



ESSAY WINNER
HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION
BY: DAVID NIETERS
NORTH HIGH SCHOOL – 12TH GRADE
TEACHER: MS. MIMI HAGEMAN

The Courage to Start a New Beginning

My grandmother, Mary Saddoris, had dreams of becoming a ballerina. She would dance all the time while her father, a concert musician, would practice. When World War II started in Italy in 1939, all her dreams stopped. She never knew when she went to bed at night whether she would be alive the next day. Explosions of gunfire would pierce the air with bits of shrapnel flying within inches of where she hid. Survival was the only thing that mattered. Finding food and water, not getting blown up by grenades hidden under trees or gardens and hiding from the German Army. Where she lost all of her dreams is where she met my grandfather. He was a medic in the American Army. They married and when the war ended, she had to leave her country and start a new life in the United States.

It took courage to step out into the unknown. Her husband was already back in the States and she had to travel from Florence, Italy to a tiny town of Debequ, Colorado, population of less than 200 people, on her own. She was torn between staying with her country, family and friends or starts a new beginning in a country where she did not speak the language and would have no friends or family other than her husband.

My grandmother survived and flourished in the United States. She has four children and my mom is one of them. She has taught me not to be afraid to step out into the future. It is alright to be afraid, but to have courage and faith in God that all will turn out to good in the end.



2009 Quotable Quotes

"[Mary's advice] ...get a good education, have an interest in life and in government and do all things to the best of your ability. Give of yourself. Love reflected where needed is the best of all"

"[grandmother's] Her goals are to be content with her journey through life while focusing on eternity"

" . .but my grandpa didn't care about race or color. He just looked at the person's character."

"Achieving my goals in life were only after learning that one must sacrifice at times to get what is wanted in the long run. . "

"be flexible, open to changes."

" . . family is the best gift God could give.. . always live life to its fullest."

"the key to being happy is to always live in the 'Now' and to always be honest . .
 . . never be selfish and always think of others first."

"Don't waste the opportunity to learn. Always remember that one person or a few persons can make a difference"

"Success is not just making a lot of money. Finding work that is satisfying can be more rewarding than making lots of money."

"If you don't have a positive attitude, nothing will work out the way you want it to."

"You will never learn any younger" (learn now because you will never be any younger)

"Be thankful for being born in the most beautiful country, for having the freedom of choosing your religion and to be anything you ever dreamed you would"

"always remain true to yourself."

"The world would be a better place if people would do that. All it would take is a little self-discipline and hard work"

"Don't do drugs, be diligent in your education; honor your siblings; choose your friends wisely and do everything as early as you can and earn what you get"

"make the best of your one and only life"

"Treat everybody the way you want to be treated, regardless of how they look or what their opinions may be. . ."

"Through my adulthood I will continue to make a stand for what is right.
For those who can't stand, I will make a stand for them...."

**COUNCIL LIAISON PRISCILLA SCALF AND
THE COLUMBUS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING OUTGOING COMMISSIONER
FOR HIS DEDICATION AND HARD WORK**



Jason Staley

2004 – 2008

The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

March 30, 2009

THE 2009 WILLIAM R. LAWS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

“We hold these truths to be self-evident
that all people are created equal...”

Presented to

Tim Solso

**FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
TO MAKING THESE WORDS
A REALITY IN COLUMBUS
AND FOR
CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Columbus Human Rights Commission

Columbus, Indiana

March 30, 2009

THE 2008 WILLIAM R. LAWS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

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March 30, 2009

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**MAYOR FRED ARMSTRONG
COUNCIL LIAISON PRISCILLA SCALF
T. CRAIG HAWES
COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL**

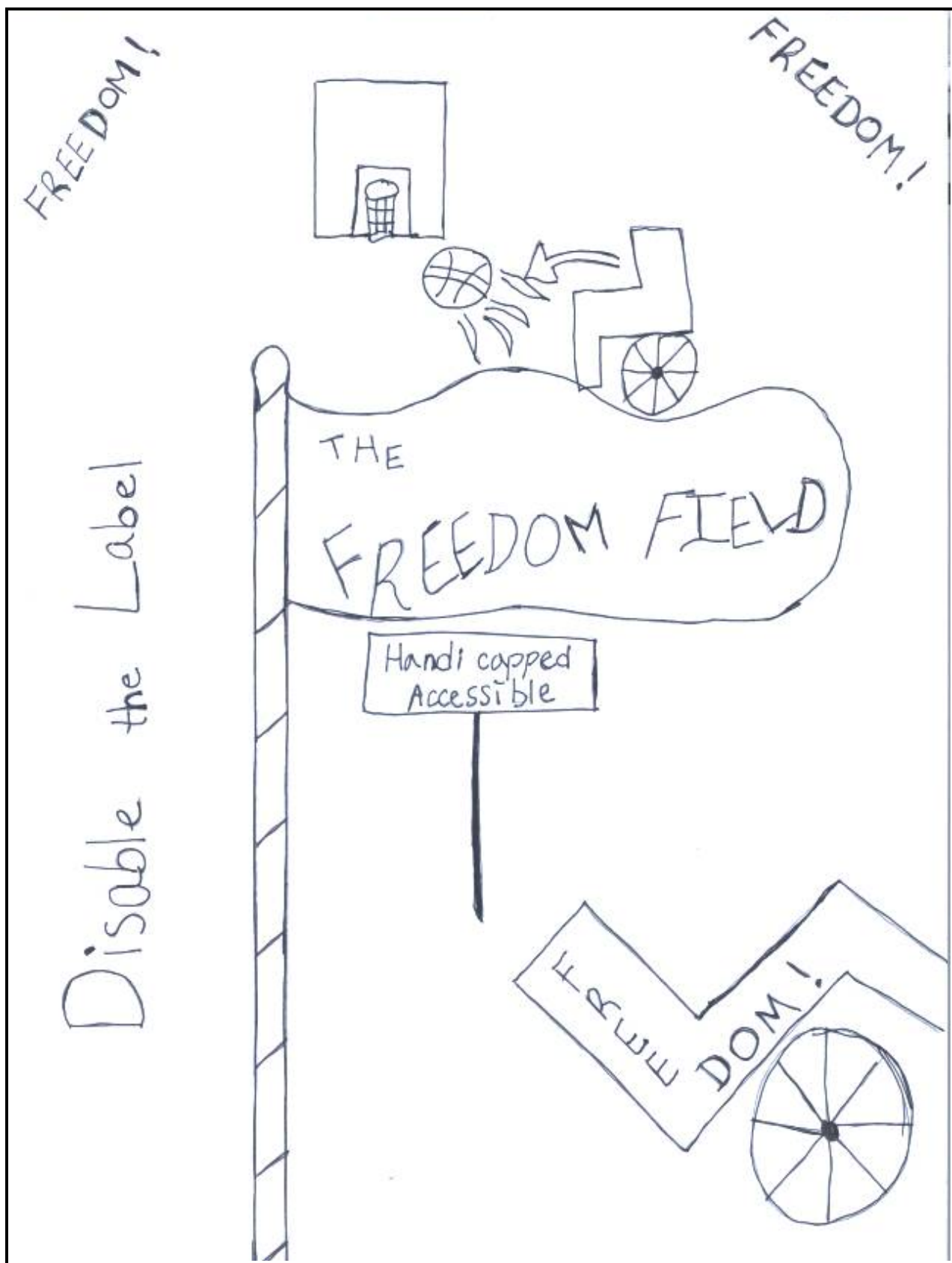


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